

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

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USSR: Leadership Views on Poland

Soviet leaders are frustrated by their inability to control the situation in Poland, but there is little evidence that this has led to any deep divisions in the Politburo. [REDACTED]

Leadership statements on Poland appear to have been carefully coordinated, and any differences in tone seem more related to the changing situation there than to individual policy preferences. The consensus remains intact, although perhaps more fragile than it has been at times in the past. [REDACTED]

One recent report suggests, however, that there have been at least varying degrees of enthusiasm for the current "wait-and-see" approach the Politburo has adopted. According to the report, President Brezhnev heads a more moderate group that includes Premier Tikhonov, party officials Kirilenko and Grishin, and KGB chief Andropov. This group has prevailed thus far, arguing just before the recent Polish party congress that the dangers of reform do not yet outweigh the adverse consequences of military intervention. [REDACTED]

The moderates favored deferring further action until the congress had ended, setting as a minimum condition for nonintervention a demonstration that the Polish Communist Party was firmly in control and that Poland would remain a member of the Warsaw Pact. A group of "interventionists" reportedly was led by Suslov and included all other members of the Politburo, except Defense Minister Ustinov, who straddled the issue, and Foreign Minister Gromyko--whose position was not explained. [REDACTED]

Although a number of aspects of the report seem questionable, the identification of positions held by Brezhnev, Tikhonov, and Suslov is generally consistent with the few other reports available that describe shades of opinion in the Politburo. The paucity of such reports, or even rumors, about leadership differences, however, suggests that this crisis has not yet produced the kind of polarity that existed in 1968 before the invasion of Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, this latest report does suggest that the Soviet leadership is not of one mind on Poland and is constantly reassessing the highly volatile situation there. [REDACTED]

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